In Memoriam

Carrie M. Frost.

A Tribute

Read in the service at Hope Haven, Bradford, Vermont, at four o'clock in the afternoon of April the twenty-ninth, nineteen hundred twenty-four.

In Weston, Vermont, seventy-one years ago the twenty-fourth day of last November, Carrie Maria Holt was born, daughter of Nathan and Livona Holt, and the youngest child of the family. She was in the line of the Mayflower company, being a lineal descendant of that stalwart pilgrim, William Brewster. There can be no question concerning the heroic strain in her blood for her grandfather, Captain Jonathan Webster, honored sire of Methodist preachers, was the great-grandson of Hannah Dustan, the heroine of Dustan Island in the Merrimac River near Concord, New Hampshire.

When Carrie was but a wee prattler the family removed from Weston Village to a farm in the hill country of Landgrove, where the home of her early childhood was a farmhouse on the border of a wood. There she and a sister, fourteen months older, played at keeping house on a great rock under the shade of mighty maples, and visited imaginary neighbors dwelling on other rocks near by. Thus living as Nature's god-children, gladdened by the beauty of flowers and inspired by the music of birds, they looked both at the things which were seen and at the things which were not seen, and were happy in the romances of childhood.

Yet the period of childhood was far from being free from anxiety and dread. The long continued and critical sickness of her mother, lying for weeks in pain and weakness on the

borderland, kept the heart of the child under a pall of sadness. She felt that she could not live without her mother, and prayed that if her mother must die she also might die. After that cloud of apprehension had passed, and she was eleven years old, her father enlisted and went away to war in the Union army; as did her only brother, who after nine months of previous service re-enlisted for the remainder of the war. Then the mother and her girls spent many months longing for, yet dreading, tidings from camp and battlefield. Earlier in life than such experiences come to many, she became one of those for whom

"The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality."

Nor as she emerged from childhood through the gates of youth into the broader ways of womanhood was it her lot to walk much under cloudless skies. More than her associates suspected or friends of closer intimacy knew, her spirit was shadowed either by a present grief or by clouds threatening future trouble. But in all this she was too brave and hopeful to yield to melancholy or permit a troubled spirit to be depressed. She could walk in shadows, cheered by light seen on distant hills.

After the war her father, having sold the place in Landgrove, purchased one of a clus-

ter of eight farms shut in by forest and mountains in the southeast corner of Weston township. Of the children living in those eight homesteads during a period of about fifty years seven boys became ministers of the gospel and two girls married ministers. In the days of Carrie's girlhood in that home two of those farms were tilled by men ordained as Christian ministers and two other farms were owned and worked by local preachers. The ordained men were then serving as pastors of outlying churches. A weekly prayer-meeting, throbbing with religious fervor, was maintained in the home of one of the pastors. The atmosphere of the neighborhood was conducive to spiritual life. The spirit of that little band of Christians was an inspiration for service.

In the summer of eighteen hundred seventy a maiden in the bloom of youth was teaching a district school and "boarding around" in Londonderry near Lowell Lake. One evening in July a young man from a hayfield in the adjoining town of Weston came on horseback to visit her at her boarding place. He returned happy in the promise of her hand in marriage on some future day. She spent the next five years earning money in various ways to meet her expenses in school at Montpelier Seminary and later at the Academy in South Woodstock, where her oldest sister was preceptress, and in strict economy realizing the most possible

from the expenditure of her hard earned dollars.

It was when Carrie Holt was sojourning in Brattleboro ministering to beleaguered spirits in the Retreat, that she entered into the glad assurance that she was a daughter of the King, one of the "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." She reached this joyous experience under the spiritual leadership of the Reverend E. C. Bass, then the pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Brattleboro. From that day more than half a century ago to the last day of consciousness in her earthly pilgrimage she had strong consolation in the hope which is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." Never did she boast that she was "already perfect," but continued "to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Although a woman

"———not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,"

she was ever a loyal disciple and follower of her Lord.

When the story of a daughter's newborn joy, written by her own hand, reached the homestead in Weston the father's only comment was, "My Carrie always was a Christian."

On a bleak winter day, the twenty-third of January, eighteen hundred seventy-six,

she was united in marriage with the life, the labors and the lot of an itinerant preacher, Timothy Prescott Frost. The marriage was solemnized in the sitting room of the farmhouse home, in the presence of a little company of family friends, by the Reverend C. P. Flanders, pastor of the Methodist church in Weston at that time. The only person of that company now left in the realm where night must follow every day is the bridegroom of those nuptials. All the others have passed on into the country where "there shall be night no more." If the journey through more than forty-eight years until death did them part was not the unbroken communion of

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one,"

the lack surely was not due to any fault in her loyalty and love. In all the devotion of holy wifehood she was faithful unto death.

Among the sacraments which hallow divinely wedded lives is the coming of a new life of their life. On one such occasion long ago the glory of the Lord banished the gloom of night and angels gladdened human hearts as they chanted good tidings of great joy. When that event takes place in a Christian home is not heaven always interested, and are not angels always near? Two nights in the history of these united lives were hallowed by the coming of a babe. The young mo-

ther took into her arms a son, Philip Prescott, at Thetford Center and a daughter, Florence Virtine, at Woodstock. From the time of their coming to the last conscious hour of her life never was there lacking in her heart a mother's solicitude or a mother's prayer. It is written "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted." Of this mother it may be written, "As the living God comforteth, so did her heart ever yearn to comfort her own, and they were comforted."

Yet did she never fall under the condemnation of her Lord expressed in the words, "He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." She swerved not from the highest loyalty. The church saw in her a wife as truly called to the ministry as was her husband. Not for one moment did she forget that she was called to serve. Nor did she forget that she was invited by her Master to serve in a ministry of high privilege, not in the place of a bond-servant but in the fellowship of a friend. As a lover of Christ and His Church she gave herself without stint to the cause for which He once died, and for ever lives. By personal appeal she continually sought to win to Christ both those who had wandered a long distance from His way and those who were not far from the Kingdom of God. In one city she did this work in Christ's stead and with gracious results at a Refuge for Girls who had become

unmarried mothers, taking one into her own home as a helper and keeping her until by a happy marriage she went to a home of her own.

Many years ago the cause of Home Missions made so strong an appeal to the convictions and sympathies of Mrs. Frost that devotion to the work of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church became her major passion in the sphere of church activities. She was Conference President in three conferences, Vermont, New York East, and Rock River; for several years Bureau Secretary of the Bureau for the West Central States; and in labors abundant for several institutions of the Society, notably, the Deaconess Home at Newark, New Jersey; Marcy Center in Chicago; and Kent Home, Greensboro, North Carolina. Nothing that she could give was too precious to be expended in this service. Here was a mistress of the manse who for more than two score years in the pastorate lived not to be ministered unto but to minister. In this ministry she often overtaxed her strength, thus prematurely exhausting her energies. Like the Good Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep, it was at the cost of life that she gave herself for His flock. No full record of her labors for her Saviour and His little ones, even "the least of these," could be given in this bundle of fragments snatched from days of watching and

waiting. In her allegiance to duty she was a Ruth, and in the abundance of her labors, a Dorcas. The things mentioned are a few of many gracious deeds which we may believe are to be found in the book of remembrance written before the Lord for those who fear the Lord and think upon His name, and who shall be His in that day when He shall make up His jewels.

What is here recorded is but a testimony and tribute from one to whom it would seem that if something of the kind were not to be written voices from many a place and many a heart, once dark but brightened by her ministries, would cry out in protest. And if it shall appear to any that more than is seemly for such an hour has been expressed let it be set down to the urgency of love.

The woman whose voice is to be heard no more within these walls was a lover of home. And although she enjoyed the parsonage home in every tarrying place of the itinerant pilgrimage she looked forward with fond expectation to the prospect of spending some years in a home of her own. Here in this Bradford home by the babbling brook and whispering pines, in congenial association with kind friends, she found all that heart could wish. Yet here joy was chastened by burdens and griefs from which there is no escape for loving hearts in this world. At the very first the son was far away across the seas amid the perils of fierce battlefields.

The brother, after long affliction, was released from his burdens to enter the country that is out of sight. A little grandson left earthly perils and burdens to develop his powers in the glory of the heavenly. The only remaining sister slipped away from friends upon the shore to join the larger company of friends beyond the tide. And in her own case there were long, weary months of breaking health. But notwithstanding all these grievances, in this home were passed many happy days, and there were times when for her this was the house of God and this was the gate of heaven.

On the morning of that day of the fatal stroke she sat at the piano and played from "Songs of Hope,"

"When the storms of life are raging,
And the billows toss me high,
It is then my Saviour holds me,
For I know that He is nigh."

Did she have some premonition of His call to come to the place prepared for her?

Long ago one sorely troubled exclaimed, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest * * * I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

She has made her escape from the pains and sorrows of the earthly life. Absent from the body, she is at home with the Lord.

The time of her departure was eight o'-clock in the evening of Sunday, April the twenty-seventh, nineteen hundred twenty-four.